The Importance of Drinking Water When Exercising

What happens without water?
If you do not drink enough water, you dehydrate. Dehydration can lead to a decrease in physical activity performance and may adversely affect your health. When you become dehydrated, your body can’t cool itself by sweating because of lack of water. Especially in dry climates like Lubbock, it is very important to start out hydrated and stay hydrated during exercise.

What are the signs of dehydration?
- Thirst
- Nausea
- Dry mouth
- Chills
- Headache
- Elevated heart rate
- Clammy skin
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath

What can dehydration lead to?
- Heat exhaustion
- Muscle cramping/fatigue
- Breakdown of skeletal muscle

How much water should I drink?
Remember it is important to drink water before, during, and after exercise. Exact amounts of water needed will vary from individual to individual (gender, exercise environment, type of exercise, and intensity of exercise are all factors).
- Before: 17-20 oz. of water at least 2 hours prior to exercise
- During: 7-10 oz. of water for every 10-20 minutes of exercise
- After: 16-24 oz. of water for each pound lost due to sweating.

What does water do for you?
- 60% of your total body weight is water
- 75% of your muscles is water
- Assists in the regulation of internal body temperature
- Protects and cushions vital organs
- Aids the digestive system

How you can prevent dehydration?
- Don’t wait until you are thirsty! Thirst is an early sign of dehydration and if you wait until you are thirsty, you have already begun to dehydrate.
- Drink water before, during, and after exercise.
- Dress for the environment.
  - During the warm months exercise at the coolest time of the day – early morning or late evening, and wear the lightest clothing that you can (lightweight t-shirts, shorts, low-cut socks).
  - During the cold months, wear several layers of clothing so that you can remove layers as you begin to sweat.
- Avoid working out in plastic or rubber suits.

Water is important for life. Keep that bottle handy on your desk and drink all day long, especially if you are planning a workout during the day.